

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1, 5, 14-16, and 30 without prejudice. Kindly amend claims 2-4, 6-8, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25 and 26, as shown below. Please add new claims 32-36, as set forth below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claim 1 (canceled):

Claim 2 (currently amended): A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the merged application user interface placeholder receives a plurality of software application user interface elements.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the merged application user interface placeholder receives a plurality of component user interface elements.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the identification unit disassociates the component from the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

Claim 5 (canceled):

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method claimed in claim [[5]] 25, wherein the merged application user interface receives a plurality of software application user interface elements.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method claimed in claim [[5]] 25, wherein the merged application user interface receives a plurality of component user interface elements.

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Claim 8 (currently amended): The method claimed in claim [[5]] 25, further comprising the step of disassociating the component from the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

Claims 9-10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of re-associating the component to the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

Claims 12-16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (currently amended): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the component is accessible from a plurality of user machines.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein a plurality of components are customized by a plurality of users, the components and their customizations accessible by users upon loading of the component into the merged application user interface.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the customized component is hidden from user machines that do not have the component loaded in the merged application user interface.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the component user interface elements are customizable in the merged application user interface.

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Claim 21 (currently amended): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim [[1]] 32, wherein the component is dynamically loadable into the merged application user interface system.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the user interface framework management system maintains customizations to components associated and disassociated from the merged application user interface.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The method as claimed in claim [[5]] 25, wherein the step of merging is performed dynamically.

Claim 24 (canceled):

Claim 25 (currently amended): [[The]] A method [as claimed in claim 24, further] for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing tools in a software application, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;

allowing a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface;

storing associations between components and users;

providing access to shared components associated with different users; and

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hiding a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The method as claimed in claim [[5]] 25, further comprising the step of maintaining customizations to components merged in the merged application user interface.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of maintaining customizations to disassociated components.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the step of disassociating includes the steps of:

traversing merged application user interface elements; and

hiding merged application user interface elements owned by the component.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

traversing hidden component user interface elements; and

applying maintained customizations to the re-associated component user interface element.

Claim 30 (canceled):

Claim 31 (previously presented): A method for managing the user interface framework of software applications when installing tools in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of a software application and a tool user interface element of a tool;

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merging the tool user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

associating the tool user interface element in the merged application user interface with the tool;

storing associations between a plurality of tools and a plurality of users;

providing access to shared tools associated with different users;

hiding a tool user interface element from users not associated with the tool;

maintaining customizations to tool user interface elements merged in the merged application user interface;

disassociating tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;

maintaining customizations of the disassociated tool user interface elements;

re-associating the tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;

and

applying maintained customizations to the re-associated tool user interface elements.

Claim 32 (new): A user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:

a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of a component to be included with the software application;

a unification unit for merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

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an identification unit for associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;
wherein the user interface framework management system:
stores associations between a plurality of tools and a plurality of users;
allows a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface;
stores associations between components and users;
provides access to shared components associated with different users; and
hides a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

Claim 33 (new): A user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:
a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of a component to be included with the software application;
a unification unit for merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;
an identification unit for associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;
wherein the user interface framework management system:
stores associations between a plurality of tools and a plurality of users;
provides access to shared tools associated with different users;
hides a tool user interface element from users not associated with the tool;

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maintains customizations to tool user interface elements merged in the merged application user interface;

disassociates tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;

maintains customizations of the disassociated tool user interface elements;

re-associates the tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;

and

applies maintained customizations to the re-associated tool user interface elements.

Claim 34 (new): A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and representing sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;

allowing a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface;

storing associations between components and users;

providing access to shared components associated with different users; and

hiding a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

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Claim 35 (new): Computer-readable media for storing instructions or statements for use in the execution in a computer of a method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;

allowing a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface;

storing associations between components and users;

providing access to shared components associated with different users; and

hiding a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

Claim 36 (new): A computer program product for use in the execution in a computer for creating a user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:

a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of a component to be included with the software application;

a unification unit for merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

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an identification unit for associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface;
wherein the user interface framework management system:
stores associations between a plurality of tools and a plurality of users;
allows a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface;
stores associations between components and users;
provides access to shared components associated with different users; and
hides a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

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